University of Saint Mary of the Lake

INSTITUTE
FOR
PASTORAL
LEADERSHIP

Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies
Thesis Project Handbook

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I. Introduction[1]

The Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies Degree culminates with the student completing a capstone thesis, the final requirement for the degree. This manual is written for the student who is ready to begin the capstone thesis project. The expectation of the *Institute for Pastoral Leadership* of the *University of Saint Mary of the Lake* is that, by completion of a Masters-level thesis, the student demonstrates his or her ability to apply the theological knowledge received over the course of study to an applied pastoral situation in a way consistent with Church teaching while, at the same, pastorally responsive to the particular context.

Steps to be taken in the Capstone Project process:

1. In consultation with the Director of the Capstone Project, identify a pastoral situation/experience to examine thru this process.
2. Student submits a formal proposal identifying the topic and resources to be used for the Capstone project to the Capstone Director.
3. The Director of the Capstone Project reviews the proposal and returns it to the student identifying any edits that are needed or revisions. The student makes the required changes and submits the revised proposal to the Director for approval.
4. Once the proposal has been approved by the Capstone Director, the student may begin working on the thesis writing. Ordinarily, the student must attain approval at least one month prior to the final semester of his/her degree program.
5. The Capstone Director assigns, in consultation with the student, a thesis advisor to work with the student on his/her thesis.
6. The student must work with the ***Writing Center*** of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake to assure the thesis meets University standards for a thesis project. The thesis will not be considered complete until it has been signed of on by the Writing Center. WRITING CENTER RESOURCES - Feehan Memorial Home - USML Feehan Memorial Library at University of Saint Mary of the Lake
7. Once the student receives approval from the writing center, and the thesis advisor, the thesis is submitted to the Capstone Director for final review. **This step must be accomplished no later than April 1st** of the graduation year to allow sufficient time for the Director to complete the review.

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II. Project Proposal

The first step for the student in preparing to write their thesis is to identify the pastoral situation/experience one intends to examine in the thesis process. The student is looking to demonstrate the ministerial intersection of theology, faithfulness to magisterial teachings, pastoral care, the human and social sciences with the practice of ministry. The composition of the project proposal follows the *USML Writers Manual* guidelines.

Sources for the Pastoral Situation

The pastoral situation, encounter, or experience may come from – but are not limited to - any of the following areas:

- **Parish ministry** i.e., RCIA, Religious Education (children or adults), staff situations, etc.
- **Parish life** i.e., parish council, committees, social organizations, encounters with individual parishioners, etc.
- **Liturgy and/or Sacrament** i.e., preparation for special liturgies, services, environment, sacramental preparation, Ministry of Care, etc.
- **Social Justice** i.e., food pantries. PADS, outreach, parish sharing, etc.
- **Health Care** i.e., chaplaincy CPE

Project Proposal Format

The project proposal consists of three sections:

1. A description of the experience, encounter, or situation that will be the focus of the thesis project.
2. A thesis statement that indicates the pastoral concern being addressed in the thesis and how the student intends to address the concern. This statement should be in the form of a 3-5 sentence paragraph. Consult the *USML Writers Manual* for details on composition of a thesis statement.
3. An annotated bibliography that lists the resources you intend to use. An annotated bibliography gives a one paragraph summary of the source with a concluding sentence describing why the student considers the resource an important source for the topic. *(See Appendix 3 for information regarding sources.)* The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader as to the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.
4. At least seven key sources are required:
    a. <u>four</u> sources from Catholic authors/sources. The principal sources used for the thesis should be academic in nature, not from popular or devotional sources. The theology courses you've taken as part of your MAPS degree would be good sources for this section.

    The subject areas would include:

- Catholic Scripture
- Catholic theology
- Spirituality
- History
- Ethics and Morality
- Social Teachings

b. three sources are from Cultural, Social and Human Sciences authors/resources. These may be data sources i.e., Barna Group, Pew Research, or texts that address the particular cultural and/or social situation of your case. The courses you took in Pastoral Theology (Field Ed & Pastoral Care) are good resources for this area.

Submitting your Proposal

You will submit your proposal to the Director of the MAPS degree program or to his/her delegate/teacher of record. The format should be as indicated in Appendix 1 of this document. It will be reviewed by one or more members of the Institute staff or faculty. You will be notified within a month of turning it in as to whether it is accepted, accepted with modifications or not accepted.

III. Writing Your Thesis Project

Style and Formatting

- Follow instructions in the *USML Writer's Manual* (found at WRITING CENTER RESOURCES - Feehan Memorial Home - USML Feehan Memorial Library At University Of Saint Mary Of The Lake) for formatting citations, footnotes, and bibliography entries.
- Use Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, most recent edition) [hereafter referred to as Turabian] for guidance in areas that are not covered by this manual and the *USML Writer's Manual*. You should purchase a copy of Turabian to have on hand as you write and format your thesis or project.
- Consult *the Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, most recent edition) [hereafter The Chicago Manual] for all questions that are not covered by this manual, the *USML Writer's Manual*, or Turabian.
- These reference works are available in the Library and are usually available at bookstores.
- All margins should be 1" all around.
- Double space text in a uniform manner; use 12 pt. font *(Times New Roman or Segue UI)*
- Follow the *USML Writers Manual* for proper formatting of quotations from texts and/or Scripture as well as footnoting quotations

- Page numbering should be in Arabic numerals, on the lower center of the page except for the title page

Formatting Paragraphs
Indent the first line of each paragraph. Do not separate paragraphs with additional space. Print on only one side of the paper using portrait orientation. Only left justify the text.

A paragraph consists of three sections: a topic sentence, a sentence(s) that expands the topic, and a final sentence(s) that summarizes the topic and points toward the next paragraph. Be sure to close a paragraph with a sentence that transitions the reader into the next paragraph.

Write your paper for a reader who is not familiar with the topic; do not write it for the teacher or director of the program. By writing it for someone whom you know is without understanding of your topic, you will need to be more specific in your language.

Lastly, each section should end with a transition that summarizes what you did in that section and informs the reader as to what you intend to do in the next section of the paper.

The Writing Center
The USML Writing Center provides support services to students at all stages of the writing process, from research through final submission. For current semester hours, please contact Tom Dougherty at tdougherty@usml.edu.

III. Elements of the Thesis Project

Title Page

- Follow the example given in Appendix 2 of this document; the title page must follow it exactly
- You must use your "name of record" on the title page. This is your official name, as recorded by the USML Registrar. If this name uses titles or suffixes, include them. However, you may not include job titles or organizational affiliations (your diocese, your employer, etc.).
- The date on the title page of your thesis/project is the month and year in which you graduate.

Table of Contents

- Label the first page of the table of contents as Contents.
- List in order the chapters or other units of text, and then the elements of the back

matter (appendices, bibliography).
- Do not include in the Contents the title page.
- Consider using the Table of Content's format in WORD that is automatically updatable, (under the **References** tab, select Table of Contents; insert an automatic one, option #2). To do this you will need to use the "Headings" function in Word for the different headings in the paper.
- Use the same numbering (Arabic or lower-case Roman) that appears on the pages themselves.
- Format page numbers to align with the right margin.
- Format the text with double-spacing between lines in the Table of Contents.

Text
- Center the text of the label for each section of your paper (Introduction, Section I)
- Use the *USML Writers Manual* for the proper formatting of the text body

Footnotes
- You must record your citations as footnotes; endnotes are not acceptable. Use the "insert footnotes" function under the References tab. This will number the footnotes consecutively throughout the entire paper.
- Refer to the *USML Writer's Manual* or Turabian for notation and reference format.
- Use 10pt font for footnote text. Double space between each footnote.
- Footnotes should be indented 5 spaces (see *Writers Manual*)

Thesis Paper Structure

Introduction

The thesis statement is included in the introduction to your thesis paper. State your purpose and the scope of the thesis project, why you chose this topic and what you believe it will add to your understanding of pastoral ministry. This section should be three-five paragraphs in length.

Section I

Describe the pastoral situation you are going to address in the thesis. Be specific as to the following:

1. The situation/experience you are addressing
2. Include background information as needed for context
3. Why this is an important point to study for the ministerial life of the church
4. How you intend to approach the topic

Section II

This is the major and longest section of the thesis. There are three areas address in this section:

A. Using resources from the **Great Tradition** of the Church, address the pastoral situation in reference to the Church' wisdom. Minimally **four** Catholic academic sources must be used in this section from the areas of Scripture, Systematics, History, Morality, Liturgy, etc.
B. Next, the student addresses the pastoral situation through the wisdom offered by applicable research from the **social and human sciences** as well as the culture. Minimally **three** academic sources must be used in this section. The student explores how insights from these sources offer information useful in forming one's pastoral response.
C. Lastly, after study and reflection on the theological and social sciences that pertain to the particular pastoral situation, the student articulates two or three insights that will shape a pastoral response to the ministerial situation. The student must explain the process by which s/he arrived at these responses.

Conclusion

Revisit your thesis statement and summarize how you achieved what you set out to do in the paper. Tie together the various sections into this conclusion. This section is usually three to five paragraphs in length.

Bibliography

The bibliography is always the last section of the thesis project. Format your bibliography according to the guidelines in the *USML Writer's Manual* and Turabian. Please note that the format for ecclesiastical documents is different than that for other texts. You may find the "Manage Sources" tab under "references" tab in Word to be very helpful. However, it will not automatically create your bibliography in whole according to Turabian and the *USML Writers Manual*.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Proposal Format

Student Name
MAPS Capstone Project Proposal
Date Submitted

I. The Ministry Experience

You state the situation or issue you will address. Then you state the approach you will take regarding the situation i.e. pastoral, spiritual, ecclesiological, etc.

II. Thesis Statement

Create a thesis statement that lays out the focus of the project and explains why it is important in terms of Catholic Pastoral Ministry.

III. Annotated Bibliography

Identify no less than seven sources for your project. (4 sources need to be from the Catholic Tradition & three from the human/social sciences.) These should be academic sources or ecclesiastical documents. After citation listed, give a brief summary and sentence or two on why it is an important source for your topic. Each annotation should be approximately 1 paragraph in length.

Appendix 2: Title Page

UNIVERSITY OF SAINT MARY OF THE LAKE

TITLE OF THESIS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE INSTITUTE FOR PASTORAL LEADERSHIP
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN PASTORAL STUDIES

BY
Name of Student

MUNDELEIN, ILLINOIS
Date

Appendix 3: Literature Review of Sources

From The USML Scholar's Manual – page 19 -
https://library.usml.edu/ld.php?content_id=50021798

The Literature Review

To develop your proposal, you will begin with a review of the literature. The literature review gives you a comprehensive picture of the status questions. You may have a general idea of your topic, but the very act of reading the relevant literature will help you refine it, narrow it and, most importantly, determine if your idea is indeed original. Additionally, you will determine if there is actually available resource material necessary to reach your goal.

Reading the literature helps fill in the other points of the outline. Perhaps you will find a gap in the secondary literature that your thesis could fill. Or you may have found a slightly different way of looking at a problem. Or you might just be organizing material that has never been brought together before. Either way, this is how you will discover your original contribution, which tells the reader why your (dissertation) thesis is important.

*From Mr. Tom Dougherty, **Mundelein Writing Center**, in an email 12.12.2019*